

## Mignon's Political Instinct

By BELLE MANIATES

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Ruth's retinue of ex-schoolmates were paying her a visit at the executive mansion, the home of her uncle, Stephen Thorn, governor of the state, likewise guardian of Ruth. Sometimes it was difficult for him to determine which of these positions presented the more intricate complications.

He was past his youth, but had not yet approached middle age. The ex-school friends found him awe inspiring and regarded him from a distance with romantic interest.

"That little silvery patch on each temple is so distingue," ardently declared Lucile.

"Makes one think of the leading man in a play when ten years are supposed to elapse between acts," giggled Mignon Gray.

It was a source of delight to the others that even Mignon felt the influence of their host's demeanor and refrained in his presence from indulgence in frivolous conversation.

To Mignon it was a matter for chagrin. She fortified herself continually by impressive reminders that he was of the people, for the people, by the people, even as she, and that a governor was not so much anyway, but the gubernatorial dignity hung round him still, and her forced courage oozed away whenever he addressed her.

One morning the retinue, with the exception of Mignon, trooped away to the golf links. Mignon remained at home to write letters, but when she knew herself to be alone in this big, stately home she suddenly experienced a sensation of her childhood days and was impelled by an irresistible desire "to be naughty." The daring idea of calling upon Ruth's uncle seized her.

"I'd like to see him 'on duty,'" she mused. "I might—yes, I will—go in to see."

There was a chest upstairs containing garments belonging to Ruth's departed kin.

Presently there emerged from the executive mansion a quaint little figure clad in an old fashioned dower sprigged skirt, a lace mantilla, a neat straw bonnet and a lace edged veil. The capitol was only a short distance from the executive mansion, and Mignon met few persons. The guard who stood in the broad corridor as she entered did not vouchsafe her a second glance as he directed her to the executive office.

Mignon did not follow his directions. Ruth had told her how she gained his private sanctum when she was in a hurry and did not have time for the red tape channels of approach through private secretary and messenger. She slipped into the "governor's parlor" and boldly opened the door from there into his private office.

The governor chanced to be alone, and he turned in surprise to see who was so bold in intrusion.

"Did you wish to see me, madam?" he asked in courteous manner, placing a chair for the visitor.

"You are the governor?" asked a queer, high pitched voice.

"I am," he admitted.

"I came to see if you would give me a position in the capitol. I am the widow of a soldier—and I pay taxes!"

"A soldier's widow?" asked the governor, with interest. "In what war did your husband serve, civil or Spanish-American?"

"There was a moment's hesitation before Mignon decided to locate 'her husband' in the civil war.

"What was his company, and in what regiment did he enlist?"

"Silence."

"Don't you know the number of his regiment?"

"Oh, yes; thirteen."

"And what state?"

"Pennsylvania."

"And what was the letter of his company?" he asked, beginning to make a memorandum.

"Why—R!" triumphantly.

His pencil poised.

"The companies were only lettered to K for infantry, you know."

"Then probably it was K," she said.

"K looks like R, you know."

"Yes, sometimes," he admitted, "but what kind of a position did you wish?"

"Any position!" desperately.

"What experience have you had?"

"I have copied legal papers," remembering a brief she had once copied for her father, who had wrathfully consigned it to the flames with the criticism that it resembled his Chinese laundry check.

"Have you, indeed?" he said in evident surprise, and Mignon felt that she had acquired importance in his regard. The governor seemed to be absorbed in meditation, and Mignon began to feel the silence embarrassing.

"I don't know of any vacancies or openings at present," he finally remarked, "but if you will make a formal application and leave it here on file I will communicate with you as soon as the opportunity offers."

"Oh, thank you!" she said gratefully.

"I don't seem to have any blank forms," he said, looking over the papers scattered on his desk. "However, I'll write one out, and you can sign it and leave your address also."

Mignon had already decided upon a name and address, so when he presently handed her a paper he had written she removed her glove, and on the line indicated she wrote, "Nancy Bettens, 3011 E. Street."

He studied the signature carefully.

"And what was your husband's first name, Mrs. Bettens?"

"Adam," was the glib response.

"You'll hear from me soon, Mrs. Bettens."

Mignon took this as a dismissal and rose to go.

"Do you think there is any hope?" she could not resist asking as she gained the door.

"No. The fact of your being a soldier's widow and your having had experience in office work will lead me to consider your application favorably. I shall offer you a position very soon," he replied earnestly.

"What fun I shall have telling the girls!" thought Mignon as she sped home. When she had made a change of costume she discovered, to her dismay, that it was too late to join the girls at the country club for luncheon, as she had promised. While she was reflecting on this change in her programme the library door opened and the governor entered.

"Oh, there isn't any luncheon!" she said. "The girls are at the golf links. Mrs. Farnham is invited out for the day, and I—I made a mistake in the time and didn't meet them. You were not expected."

"I didn't come for luncheon," he replied, "but what will you do?"

"Oh, the cook will see that I don't go hungry," she laughed. Some way her fear of him had vanished.

"Let me see to that instead of letting the cook. Will you go to luncheon with me now?"

"What have you been doing all the morning?" he asked as they sat at a little palm screened table.

"I've been writing," she replied in a ruminating tone.

"So have I, and I feel the need of recreation. Will you drive with me after luncheon?"

Mignon decided she would not tell the girls of her morning call. As the days went by she became the companion of the governor in his hours of ease. One evening as she sat alone in the library he suddenly appeared and laid a paper before her. She caught her breath. It was the paper she had signed in the executive office.

"I have come for the fulfillment of your promise," he said gravely.

She had not read the paper that morning in his office, as he had given her no opportunity to do so. With burning cheeks she now perused the startling application:

"I do hereby faithfully promise that when Stephen Thorn, governor of the state of —, asks me to be his wife I will accept the offer."

NANCY BETTENS, 3011 E. Street.

"Well?" he asked entrancingly.

"It isn't legal or binding," she said defiantly. "Because, you see, it is signed by a fictitious name."

"Will you not remedy that defect?"

"I prefer," she said softly, "that you make me a verbal offer."

From the Apocrypha.

It is impossible to exaggerate the immense indebtedness of English poetry and Italian poetry to the Apocrypha. The beautiful lines of Young in his "Night Thoughts"—

But their hearts wounded, like the wounded air,  
Soon close; where passed the shaft no trace is found—

are evidently to be traced to the verse in the "Book of Wisdom," "As when an arrow is shot at a mark it parteth the air, that immediately cometh together again, so that a man cannot know where it went through." The famous "Hymn of Praise" in Milton's "Paradise" is clearly modeled after the "Benedicta" or the "Song of the Three Children" in the Apocrypha, as in the lines:

His praise, ye winds, that from our quarters blow,  
Breathe soft or loud, and wave or top;—  
With every plant, in sign of worship, wave.

It is also to the Apocrypha as to the book of Proverbs we owe many maxims which have become household words in our language and in the languages of all civilized nations.

Apprenticeship.

The disrepute into which apprenticeship has fallen and to which so much unemployed and unskilled labor is to be attributed has no more historical foundation than has the prevailing dislike to domestic service. Both were honorable enough professions at one time, only slightly differing from each other in etymology as in kind. The apprentice from the French "appren-dre" to learn—was usually bound for a term of years to his master, who undertook to maintain and instruct him. The domestic servant, called a menial by law from being "intra moenia," within walls—was, as a rule, bound only for a year. Neither implied any reproach. Indeed, as in the case of Dick Whittington, the London apprentice was very often the younger son of a country gentleman. Perhaps the law made later on had existing into the seventeenth century, under which all young men and women were compellable by the justices to be apprenticed in some way, may have produced a dislike to apprenticeship. —London Chronicle.

Don't Blink Your Eyes.

If ever you find yourself getting into the habit of blinking your eyes rapidly without any cause stamp the inclination out at once. An authority says that this habit will make your eyesight fall long before it should. Natural blinking is essential to clear and moisten the eyes, and the average number of natural blinks per minute is about twenty. These are necessary, and you do them unconsciously. But a nervous "blinker" will get in something like a couple of hundred in a minute in bad cases, and the result of this is a big development of the eyelid muscles, and a constant irritation that acts on the optic nerve and renders the sight daily more weak and irritable. The cure consists in keeping the eyes shut for at least ten minutes in every hour, thus resting them, and bathing the lids in warm water.

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Pursuant to the order of GEORGE R. BROWN, Surrogate of the County of Essex, this day made, on the application of the undersigned administratrix of said deceased, notice is hereby given to the creditors of said deceased to exhibit to the undersigned under oath or affirmation their claims and demands against the estate of said deceased, within nine months from this date, or they will be forever barred from prosecuting or recovering the same against said estate.

LUCY DEHAET.

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